

CONCERN REGARDING THE REPRESSION OF THE RELIGIOUS  
FREEDOM AND HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE IRANIAN BAHÁ'Í  
COMMUNITY BY THE GOVERNMENT OF IRAN; CONCERN RE-  
GARDING THE GROSS VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND  
CIVIL LIBERTIES OF THE SYRIAN PEOPLE BY THE GOVERN-  
MENT OF THE SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC; SUPPORT OF FULL  
MEMBERSHIP OF ISRAEL IN THE WEOG AT THE U.N.; AND  
SUPPORT FOR THE ACCESSION OF ISRAEL TO THE OECD

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MARKUP

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE MIDDLE EAST  
AND CENTRAL ASIA

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON  
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

ON

**H. Con. Res. 319, H. Con. Res. 363,  
H. Res. 615 and H. Res. 617**

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# CONTENTS

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	Page
MARKUP OF	
H. Con. Res. 319, Expressing the grave concern of Congress regarding the continuing repression of the religious freedom and human rights of the Iranian Bahá'í community by the Government of Iran .....	2
Amendment to H. Con. Res. 319 offered by the Honorable Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, a Representative in Congress from the State of Florida, and Chairwoman, Subcommittee on the Middle East and Central Asia .....	9
H. Con. Res. 363, Expressing the grave concern of Congress regarding the continuing gross violations of human rights and civil liberties of the Syrian people by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic .....	10
Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute to H. Con. Res. 363 offered by the Honorable Ileana Ros-Lehtinen .....	15
H. Res. 615, Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives in support of full membership of Israel in the Western European and Others Group (WEOG) at the United Nations .....	19
Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute to H. Res. 615 offered by the Honorable Ileana Ros-Lehtinen .....	23
H. Res. 617, Expressing support for the accession of Israel to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) .....	27
Amendment to H. Res. 617 offered by the Honorable Ileana Ros-Lehtinen ...	30



**CONCERN REGARDING THE REPRESSION OF THE RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AND HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE IRANIAN BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY BY THE GOVERNMENT OF IRAN; CONCERN REGARDING THE GROSS VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES OF THE SYRIAN PEOPLE BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC; SUPPORT OF FULL MEMBERSHIP OF ISRAEL IN THE WEOG AT THE U.N.; AND SUPPORT FOR THE ACCESSION OF ISRAEL TO THE OECD**

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**WEDNESDAY, MAY 12, 2004**

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE MIDDLE EAST  
AND CENTRAL ASIA,  
COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,  
*Washington, DC.*

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 2 o'clock p.m. in Room 2200, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Joseph R. Pitts presiding.

Mr. PITTS. The Subcommittee will come to order. We are convening to mark up the following resolutions: H. Con. Res. 319, expressing the grave concern of Congress regarding the continuing repression of the religious freedom and human rights of the Iranian Bahá'í community by the Government of Iran; H. Con. Res. 363, expressing the grave concern of Congress regarding the continuing gross violations of human rights and civil liberties of the Syrian people by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic; H. Res. 615, expressing the sense of the House of Representatives in support of full membership of Israel in the Western European and Others Group (WEOG) at the United Nations; and H. Res. 617, expressing support for the accession of Israel to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

It is my understanding that these resolutions are completely non-controversial. Accordingly, we will consider them en bloc. Without objection, the four resolutions will be favorably reported to the Full Committee, and the amendments which the Members have before them will be deemed adopted. Any Member may insert a statement in the record.

[The resolutions and amendments referred to follow:]

108TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. CON. RES. 319

Expressing the grave concern of Congress regarding the continuing repression of the religious freedom and human rights of the Iranian Bahá'í community by the Government of Iran.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 30, 2003

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN (for herself, Mr. LANTOS, and Mr. SMITH of New Jersey) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations

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## CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the grave concern of Congress regarding the continuing repression of the religious freedom and human rights of the Iranian Bahá'í community by the Government of Iran.

Whereas in 1982, 1984, 1988, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1996, and in 2000, Congress, by concurrent resolution, declared that it holds the Government of Iran responsible for upholding the rights of all its nationals, including members of the Bahá'í Faith;

Whereas the followers of Bahá'u'lláh, who constitute the largest religious minority in Iran, are not recognized under the Iranian Constitution and are deprived thereby of adequate legal protection;

Whereas Congress has deplored the Government of Iran's persecution of the Bahá'í community and has condemned Iran's execution of more than 200 Bahá'í and the imprisonment of thousands of others solely on account of their religious beliefs;

Whereas on February 22, 1993, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights published a confidential Iranian Government document revealing that these repressive actions are part of a deliberate policy to destroy the Bahá'í community, a deliberate policy that was designed and approved by the highest officials in the Iranian Government;

Whereas in 2002, when the United States was not a member of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, the resolution against human rights abuses in Iran failed to pass for the first time in 17 consecutive years;

Whereas in 2003, a resolution against human rights abuses in Iran was not introduced for a vote at the meeting of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights;

Whereas the Government of Iran is now free to continue its systematic and deliberate policy to destroy the Bahá'í community in the absence of international monitors;

Whereas the use of harassment, in the form of arrests, suspended sentences, and short-term detentions against the Iranian Bahá'ís have increased since the failure in 2002 to adopt the United Nations resolution against human rights abuses in Iran;

Whereas four Bahá'ís remain imprisoned in Iran solely because of their religious beliefs, 1 serving a 4-year sentence and another a life sentence for apostasy from

Islam, while 2 others are serving 15 years of imprisonment for associating with Bahá'í institutions;

Whereas the Iranian Government's deliberate policy to expel Bahá'ís from universities once it becomes known that they are Bahá'ís has not changed;

Whereas Bahá'ís continue to be banned from studying at Iranian universities and therefore were forced to create their own Bahá'í Institute of Higher Education (BIHE) using private homes and volunteer faculty throughout Iran, yet in July 2002, Iranian Revolutionary Guards intimidated students and systematically disrupted qualifying examinations for the Bahá'í university in nine districts by videotaping the proceedings, interrogating students, and confiscating Bahá'í books and examination papers;

Whereas the Iranian Government's deliberate policy to deny Bahá'ís any position of influence, such as in the educational sector, has not changed;

Whereas in 1998, officers of the Iranian Government arrested 36 faculty members of the Bahá'í school and seized textbooks, scientific papers, computers, desks and benches from 532 Bahá'í homes and, in March 2003, a Bahá'í was re-imprisoned for, among similar charges, educating and training Bahá'í youth in various professions and crafts;

Whereas the Iranian Government's deliberate policy to deny Bahá'í individuals employment if they identify their religion has not changed;

Whereas some 10,000 Bahá'ís were dismissed from government positions and educational institutions in the 1980s because of their religious beliefs, many remain unemployed and receive no unemployment benefits or pensions,

while others have been required to return salaries or pensions paid to them before they were dismissed;

Whereas the Iranian Government's deliberate policy to destroy the Bahá'í community's cultural roots inside the country has not changed;

Whereas the Iranian Government has refused to permit Iranian Bahá'ís to elect their leaders, refuses to return confiscated Bahá'í community properties, refuses to allow Bahá'ís to assemble as a community, and has demonstrated a desire to impose its own religious ideology on Bahá'í youth, as shown by the arrest of 17 Bahá'í boys and girls, in June 2002, on the way to a camp for Bahá'í teaching and cultural activities;

Whereas the Iranian Government's deliberate policy to destroy the Bahá'í community's cultural roots outside the country has not changed;

Whereas in February 2001, Iranian authorities denied visas to non-Iranian Bahá'ís holding Indian, South Korean, Japanese, and United States passports who were part of the Bahá'í International Community's delegation to the Regional Preparatory Conference for the United Nations' World Conference Against Racism, held in Tehran; and

Whereas the Government of Iran's deliberate policy of slowly strangling the Bahá'í community's viability is in direct violation of international norms expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and has not changed: Now, therefore, be it

1        *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*  
2 *concurring), That Congress—*

1 (1) expects the Government of Iran to uphold  
2 the rights of all its nationals, including the members  
3 of the Bahá'í Faith, in a manner consistent with  
4 Iran's obligations under the Universal Declaration of  
5 Human Rights and other international agreements  
6 guaranteeing the civil and political rights of its citi-  
7 zens, including freedom of thought, conscience, and  
8 religion;

9 (2) condemns the deliberate policy of the Gov-  
10 ernment of Iran to undermine the viability of the  
11 Bahá'í community;

12 (3) urges the Government of Iran to permit  
13 Bahá'í students to attend, and Bahá'í faculty to  
14 teach, at Iranian universities, as well as to permit  
15 the Bahá'í Institute of Higher Education to continue  
16 teaching functions among Bahá'í youth without dis-  
17 turbance;

18 (4) urges the Government of Iran to eliminate  
19 employment discrimination against Bahá'ís in both  
20 public and private sectors, and to distribute pensions  
21 and unemployment benefits without respect to belief  
22 or religious affiliation;

23 (5) urges the Government of Iran to dem-  
24 onstrate its commitment to human rights, democ-  
25 racy, and religious freedom by making a legislative

1 enactment to clarify that the civil and political rights  
2 of all unrecognized minorities or communities, such  
3 as the Bahá'ís, are to be respected regardless of  
4 their religious beliefs;

5 (6) urges the Government of Iran to allow the  
6 reestablishment of Bahá'í institutions, to give indi-  
7 viduals the freedom to manifest their religion, and to  
8 return all confiscated Bahá'í properties;

9 (7) urges the United States representative to  
10 the United Nations to pursue a resolution on human  
11 rights violations in Iran, including specific mention  
12 of the the situation of the Bahá'ís, and calls for re-  
13 estabishment of the mandate of the Special Rep-  
14 resentative on Iran at the United Nations Commis-  
15 sion on Human Rights; and

16 (8) calls upon the President to continue—

17 (A) to assert that the United States re-  
18 gards the human rights practices of the Govern-  
19 ment of Iran, particularly its treatment of the  
20 Bahá'í community and other religious minori-  
21 ties, as a significant factor in the foreign policy  
22 of the United States Government regarding  
23 Iran; and

24 (B) to encourage other governments to  
25 continue to appeal to the Government of Iran,

8

7

1           and to cooperate with other governments and  
2           international organizations, including the  
3           United Nations and its agencies, in efforts to  
4           protect the religious rights of the Bahá'ís and  
5           other minorities.

○

**AMENDMENT TO H. CON. RES. 319****OFFERED BY MS. ROS-LEHTINEN**

Strike the sixth clause of the preamble and insert the following:

Whereas for the past three years the United Nations Commission on Human Rights has failed to pass a resolution condemning human rights abuses in Iran;

Strike the seventh clause of the preamble and insert the following:

Whereas the failure of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights to pass a resolution regarding human rights abuses in Iran may erroneously suggest that the Government of Iran has improved its human rights record and has stopped its policy to systematically destroy the Bahai community;

In the eighth clause of the preamble, strike “to adopt the United Nations resolution” and insert “to adopt a United Nations Commission on Human Rights resolution”.

In the tenth clause of the preamble, strike “once it becomes known that they are Bahais”.

Page 5, beginning on line 25, strike “making a legislative enactment to clarify” and insert “legally clarifying”.

108TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

## H. CON. RES. 363

Expressing the grave concern of Congress regarding the continuing gross violations of human rights and civil liberties of the Syrian people by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic.

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### IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 11, 2004

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN (for herself, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. ACKERMAN, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. PENCE, Mr. MCCOTTER, Mr. TANCREDO, Mr. BERMAN, Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Ms. BERKLEY, and Mr. LANTOS) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations

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## CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the grave concern of Congress regarding the continuing gross violations of human rights and civil liberties of the Syrian people by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Whereas the Syrian Arab Republic is governed by an authoritarian regime which, according to the 2003 Department of State Report on Human Rights Practices, continues to commit serious human rights abuses, including “the use of torture” and “arbitrary arrest and detention”;

Whereas hundreds of political prisoners in Syria have never been tried for any offense, in violation of Article 9 of the

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (General Assembly resolution 217 A (III) of December 10, 1948);

Whereas the 2003 Department of State Human Rights Report states that Syria “significantly restricts freedom of speech and of the press”, that “freedom of assembly does not exist under the law”, and that “the Government restricted freedom of association”;

Whereas a recent press law enacted in September 2001 permits Syria to arbitrarily deny or revoke publishing licenses for such vague reasons as “related to the public interest”, and compels privately owned media sources to submit all material to government censors for clearance;

Whereas Syrian authorities have arrested two journalists for writing articles published in Lebanese newspapers criticizing Syria;

Whereas foreign media correspondents have been expelled from Syria for reporting that runs contrary to what is officially sanctioned by Syria;

Whereas Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights declares: “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”;

Whereas Article 20 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: “Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.”;

Whereas Human Rights Watch reports that Syria maintains its “pressure on the country’s fragile human rights movement through a combination of intimidation, criminal prosecution of leading activists, and imprisonment”;

Whereas Amnesty International has reported that the security forces of Syria are targeting emerging human rights organizations in Syria in an apparent attempt to intimidate those organizations into ceasing their work in Syria;

Whereas attorneys in Syria working with these Syrian human rights organizations have reportedly been harassed and persecuted by the government-controlled bar association, which works closely with the ruling Ba'ath Party and the government security forces;

Whereas the criminal law of Syria allows for the acquittal of an accused rapist if the suspect marries the victim;

Whereas the criminal law of Syria provides for reduced sentences in cases of "honor" killings;

Whereas the family law of Syria as applied to Muslim women is governed by Sharia (Islamic) law and is discriminatory in marriage, divorce, and inheritance matters;

Whereas Article 7 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: "All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law.";

Whereas the infringement by Syria on human rights and civil liberties extends into the Lebanese Republic, which it continues to occupy in violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions;

Whereas Human Rights Watch, in its 2003 World Report, stated that: "Political activists in Lebanon continued to demand the withdrawal of all Syrian forces from the country and organized demonstrations throughout the year, many of which the internal security forces dispersed forcibly";

Whereas nongovernmental organizations in Lebanon continue their efforts to discover the fate of the nearly 200 “disappeared” Lebanese citizens believed to have been the victims of arbitrary detention or “disappearance” by the Syrian authorities; and

Whereas Freedom House, in its Special Report to the 59th Session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in 2003, classified Syria as “One of the World’s Most Repressive Regimes” for its severe repression of political and civil liberties and its egregious violations of human dignity: Now, therefore, be it

1       *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*  
2 *concurring), That Congress—*

3           (1) condemns the numerous violations of funda-  
4       mental human rights by the Government of the Syr-  
5       ian Arab Republic;

6           (2) calls on the international community to  
7       adopt a resolution at the upcoming 60th Session of  
8       the United Nations Commission on Human Rights  
9       which details the dismal human rights record of  
10      Syria and establishes a Special Rapporteur to fur-  
11      ther investigate these abuses;

12          (3) expresses its support for the people of Syria  
13      in their daily struggle for freedom, respect for  
14      human rights and civil liberties, democratic self-gov-  
15      ernance, and the establishment of the rule of law;

16          (4) encourages the President and the Secretary  
17      of State, acting through the Middle East Partner-

1 ship Initiative (managed by the Department of  
2 State) and other avenues, to reach out to dissidents,  
3 human rights activists, and the pro-democracy oppo-  
4 sition in Syria, and to assist them in their efforts;  
5 and

6 (5) urges the adoption and pursuit of these and  
7 other policies to seek a democratic government in  
8 Syria that will—

9 (A) restore freedom to the people of Syria;

10 (B) cease the illegal occupation by Syria of  
11 the Lebanese Republic;

12 (C) abandon support for terrorism by  
13 Syria; and

14 (D) live in peace and security with the  
15 international community.

○

**AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE  
TO H. CON. RES. 363  
OFFERED BY MS. ROS-LEHTINEN**

Strike the preamble and insert the following:

Whereas the Syrian Arab Republic is governed by an authoritarian regime which continues to commit serious human rights abuses, including the use of torture and arbitrary arrest and detention;

Whereas the Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2003 states that Syria "significantly restricts freedom of speech and of the press", that "freedom of assembly does not exist under the law", and that "the Government restricted freedom of association";

Whereas Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.";

Whereas Article 20 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states "Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.";

Whereas Syria's September 2001 press law permits the government to arbitrarily deny or revoke publishing licenses for vague reasons and compels media to submit all material to government censors;

Whereas Syrian authorities have arrested, or, in the case of foreigners, expelled two journalists for writing critically about Syria's policies;

Whereas Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have reported that the security forces of Syria are targeting emerging Syrian human rights organizations, as well as their attorneys, in an apparent attempt to intimidate those organizations;

Whereas on March 8, 2004, Syrian security forces arrested more than 30 human rights dissidents and civilians at a sit-in in front of the parliament;

Whereas a United States diplomat who was watching the peaceful demonstrations was also arrested and held for an hour in what the United States Government called an unacceptable violation of diplomatic practice and which the United States protested "in the strongest terms";

Whereas Article 7 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states "All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law.";

Whereas the criminal law of Syria provides for reduced sentences in cases of "honor" killings, and spousal rape is not illegal;

Whereas the infringement by Syria on human rights and civil liberties extends into the Lebanese Republic, which it continues to occupy in violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions;

Whereas Human Rights Watch, in its 2003 World Report, stated that "political activists in Lebanon continued to demand the withdrawal of all Syrian forces from the country and organized demonstrations throughout the

year, many of which the internal security forces dispersed forcibly”;

Whereas hundreds of Lebanese civilians are believed to have been killed or “disappeared” by Syrian occupation forces or its secret police;

Whereas hundreds of Kurdish civilians were injured or killed in clashes with the Syrian authorities that began on March 12, 2004, in Qamishli, a city in northeastern Syria and, according to Syrian Kurdish sources, security forces used live ammunition against unarmed civilians; and

Whereas human rights and democracy groups in Syria have sponsored a petition urging greater freedoms and the release of all political prisoners, which has garnered more than 6,000 signatures: Now, therefore, be it

Strike all after the resolved clause and insert the following:

1 That Congress—

2           (1) condemns the consistent pattern of gross  
3           violations of internationally recognized human rights  
4           by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic;

5           (2) calls on the international community to  
6           adopt a resolution at the upcoming session of the  
7           United Nations General Assembly which details the  
8           dismal human rights record of Syria;

9           (3) expresses its support for the people of Syria  
10          in their daily struggle for freedom, respect for

1 human rights and civil liberties, democratic self-gov-  
2 ernance, and the establishment of the rule of law;

3 (4) encourages the President and the Secretary  
4 of State to reach out to dissidents, human rights ac-  
5 tivists, and the nonviolent democratic opposition in  
6 Syria, and to assist them in their efforts; and

7 (5) urges the adoption and pursuit of these and  
8 other policies to seek a democratic government in  
9 Syria that will—

10 (A) bring freedom and democracy to the  
11 people of Syria;

12 (B) cease the illegal occupation by Syria of  
13 the Lebanese Republic;

14 (C) abandon support for terrorism by  
15 Syria; and

16 (D) live in peace and security with the  
17 international community.

Amend the title so as to read: “Resolution express-  
ing the grave concern of Congress regarding the con-  
tinuing gross violations of human rights and civil liberties  
of the Syrian and Lebanese people by the Government of  
the Syrian Arab Republic.”.

108TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

## H. RES. 615

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives in support of full membership of Israel in the Western European and Others Group (WEOG) at the United Nations.

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### IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 30, 2004

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN (for herself, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. LANTOS, Mr. PENCE, Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia, Mr. MCCOTTER, Mr. CROWLEY, and Mr. ACKERMAN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations

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## RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives in support of full membership of Israel in the Western European and Others Group (WEOG) at the United Nations.

Whereas the election of member states of the United Nations to the major bodies of the United Nations is determined explicitly on a regional basis;

Whereas Israel has been refused admission to the Asia geographical region of the United Nations—the only member state of the United Nations that remains outside its appropriate geographical region—and therefore cannot be elected to any major body of the United Nations, is precluded from voting in any United Nations major body,

except the General Assembly, and is thus denied full participation in the day-to-day work of the United Nations;

Whereas according to current United Nations procedures the Bureau of every United Nations conference is comprised of one representative from each geographical region of the United Nations and Israel is therefore denied access to this vital apparatus enjoyed by other United Nations member states;

Whereas on May 30, 2000, Israel accepted an invitation to become a temporary member of the Western European and Others Group (WEOG) at the United Nations;

Whereas Israel's membership in the Western European and Others Group is limited and, as such, Israel is not allowed to compete for open seats in the United Nations body and Israeli representatives are not allowed to run for positions in major bodies of the United Nations or United Nations-affiliated agencies, such as the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and the Security Council;

Whereas Israel is only allowed to participate in limited activities of the Western European and Others Group in the New York office of the United Nations, is excluded from discussions and consultations of the Group at the United Nations offices in Geneva, Nairobi, Rome, and Vienna, and therefore, cannot participate in United Nations conferences on human rights, racism, and a number of other issues handled in these forums;

Whereas membership in the regional bloc of the Western European and Others Group includes the non-European countries of Canada, Australia, and the United States;

Whereas Israel is linked to Western European and Others Group member states by strong economic, political, and cultural ties;

Whereas the Western European and Others Group is the only regional group which is not purely geographical but rather comprised of countries which share a Western democratic tradition; and

Whereas Israel is a free and democratic country and its voting pattern in the United Nations is consistent with that of the Western European and Others Group member states: Now, therefore, be it

1       *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the House of Rep-  
2       resentatives that—

3               (1) the President should direct the United  
4       States Permanent Representative to the United Na-  
5       tions to seek an immediate end to the persistent and  
6       deplorable inequality experienced by Israel in the  
7       United Nations;

8               (2) United States interests would be well served  
9       if Israel were afforded the benefits of full member-  
10       ship in the Western European and Others Group  
11       (WEOG) at the United Nations so that it could fully  
12       participate in the United Nations system;

13               (3) in accordance with section 405(a) of divi-  
14       sion C of H.R. 1950, as passed the House of Rep-  
15       resentatives on July 16, 2003, “the Secretary of  
16       State and other appropriate officials of the United

1 States Government should pursue an aggressive dip-  
2 lomatic effort and should take all necessary steps to  
3 ensure the extension and upgrade of Israel's mem-  
4 bership in the Western European and Others Group  
5 at the United Nations"; and

6 (4) the Secretary of State should submit to  
7 Congress on a regular basis a report which describes  
8 actions taken by the United States Government to  
9 encourage the Western European and Others Group  
10 member states to accept Israel as a full member of  
11 their regional bloc and describes the responses there-  
12 to from the member states.

○

**AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE  
TO H. RES. 615  
OFFERED BY MS. ROS-LEHTINEN**

Strike the preamble and insert the following:

Whereas since the mid-1960s, the member states of the United Nations have been divided into five regional groups, including the Western European and Others Group and the African, Asian, Latin American, and Eastern European groups;

Whereas the United Nations increasingly relies on this “Group System” to facilitate its work and two leading United Nations organs, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, have passed numerous resolutions granting this system a central role in United Nations elections;

Whereas Israel has been refused admission to the Asian Group of the United Nations and is therefore denied the rights and privileges of full membership in the United Nations;

Whereas exclusion of Israel violates crucial principles of the United Nations Charter, including the right of states to be treated in accordance with the principle of sovereign equality and the right to vote and participate fully in the United Nations General Assembly;

Whereas the Bureau of every United Nations conference comprises one representative from each geographical region of the United Nations and Israel is therefore

denied access to this vital apparatus enjoyed by other United Nations member states;

Whereas on May 30, 2000, Israel accepted an invitation to become a temporary member of the Western European and Others Group at the United Nations;

Whereas Israel's membership in the Western European and Others Group is limited and, as a temporary member, Israel is not allowed to compete for open seats or to run for positions in major bodies of the United Nations, such as the Security Council, or United Nations-affiliated agencies, such as the United Nations Commission on Human Rights;

Whereas Israel is only allowed to participate in limited activities of the Western European and Others Group at the United Nations headquarters and is excluded from discussions and consultations of the Group at the United Nations offices in Geneva, Nairobi, Rome, and Vienna;

Whereas the Western European and Others Group includes Canada, Australia, and the United States;

Whereas Israel is linked to Western European and Others Group member states by strong economic, political, and cultural ties;

Whereas the Western European and Others Group is the only bloc which is not purely geographical but is rather composed solely of countries which share a Western democratic tradition; and

Whereas Israel is a free and democratic country and its voting pattern in the United Nations is consistent with that of the Western European and Others Group member states: Now, therefore, be it

Strike all after the resolving clause and insert the following:

1       That it is the sense of the House of Representatives  
2 that—

3           (1) the President should direct the Secretary of  
4 State and the United States Permanent Representa-  
5 tive to the United Nations to seek an immediate end  
6 to the persistent and deplorable inequality experi-  
7 enced by Israel in the United Nations;

8           (2) United States interests would be well served  
9 if Israel were afforded the benefits of full member-  
10 ship in the Western European and Others Group at  
11 the United Nations so that it could fully participate  
12 in the United Nations system;

13          (3) consistent with section 405(a) of division C  
14 of H.R. 1950, as passed the House of Representa-  
15 tives on July 16, 2003, “the Secretary of State and  
16 other appropriate officials of the United States Gov-  
17 ernment should pursue an aggressive diplomatic ef-  
18 fort and should take all necessary steps to ensure  
19 the extension and upgrade of Israel’s membership in  
20 the Western European and Others Group at the  
21 United Nations”; and

22          (4) the Secretary of State should continue to  
23 submit to Congress on a regular basis a report

1       which describes actions taken by the United States  
2       Government to encourage the Western European  
3       and Others Group member states to accept Israel as  
4       a full member of their regional bloc and describes  
5       the responses thereto from the member states.

Amend the title so as to read: “Resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives in support of full membership of Israel in the Western European and Others Group at the United Nations.”.

108TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. RES. 617

Expressing support for the accession of Israel to the Organization for  
Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 30, 2004

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN (for herself, Mr. PENCE, Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia,  
Mr. McCOTTER, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. BLUNT, and Mr. LANTOS) submitted  
the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Inter-  
national Relations

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## RESOLUTION

Expressing support for the accession of Israel to the Organi-  
zation for Economic Co-operation and Development  
(OECD).

Whereas Israel has been trying to join the Organization for  
Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) since  
2000, when it met the OECD's membership requirements  
relating to industrial and per-capita product criteria;

Whereas Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom and Finance  
Minister Binyamin Netanyahu recently sent a joint letter  
to the foreign and finance ministers of the 30 member  
countries of the OECD, stating that Israel's involvement  
as a non-member country in the OECD's various commit-  
tees is increasing, and that Israel meets the economic  
and institutional criteria required to join the OECD;

Whereas Israel was recently asked to take part in the OECD's Insurance and Commerce Committees;

Whereas membership in the OECD could enhance Israel's status on the global market and within international financial institutions, lowering the risk factor on foreign loans to Israel;

Whereas Israel's economic and technological standing could potentially benefit OECD member countries in the science and technology, including high-technology, sectors;

Whereas in 2003, the World Economic Forum ranked Israel 20th out of 102 countries in its Growth Competitiveness Index, and the World Economic Forum's Technology Index ranked Israel 9th, before Canada (11th), Norway (13th), Germany (14th), the United Kingdom (16th), and the Netherlands (18th); and

Whereas Israel is carrying out far reaching economic reforms based on the OECD's recommendations with respect to taxes, labor, competition, capital markets, pension funds, energy, infrastructures, communications, and transport: Now, therefore, be it

1       *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the House of Rep-  
2       resentatives that—

3               (1) Israel shares the commitment to democratic  
4       government and the market economy that is the  
5       foundation of the Organization for Economic Co-op-  
6       eration and Development (OECD);

7               (2) Israel meets the OECD's membership re-  
8       quirements and has been an active participant as a

1 non-member country in various OECD activities,  
2 such as adherence to the OECD Declaration on  
3 International Investment and Multinational Enter-  
4 prises;

5 (3) the United States Government should sup-  
6 port and advocate the accession of Israel to the  
7 OECD at the next meeting of the OECD, including  
8 through coordination of efforts with Mexico, Great  
9 Britain, and other countries supportive of Israel's  
10 membership in the OECD; and

11 (4) given the discriminatory policies against  
12 Israel in other international fora, Israel, upon acces-  
13 sion to the OECD, should be afforded all the rights  
14 and privileges granted to all other member countries,  
15 including representation in the OECD's Council, the  
16 governing body of the organization.

○

**AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 617**  
**OFFERED BY MS. ROS-LEHTINEN**

Page 3, line 4, insert “and” at the end.

Page 3, line 10, strike “; and” and insert a period.

Page 3, strike line 11 and all that follows through  
line 16.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Chairman.

Mr. PITTS. The gentleman, Mr. Ackerman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Reserving the right to object.

Mr. PITTS. Reserving the right to object, the gentleman is recognized.

Mr. ACKERMAN. And I certainly will not object. I thank you for chairing today's session, Mr. Chairman. I want to particularly commend the Chair of the Subcommittee, Ms. Ros-Lehtinen, for bringing these resolutions before us today. She has long been a champion for human rights around the globe, and today's resolutions regarding human rights in Syria and concerning the repression of the Bahá'í in Iran continue her good works in that regard.

Additionally, I am pleased to see the resolutions regarding Israel's participation in the Western European and Others Group at the U.N. and supporting Israel's ascension to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. I think it is important for the Congress to speak out in support of Israel's participation in international organizations, and Ms. Ros-Lehtinen has been a leader in that regard as well. I thank her, and I thank you, Mr. Chair, and I urge our colleagues to support the resolutions, and I withdraw my reservation.

Mr. CROWLEY. Reserving the right to object, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. PITTS. The gentleman is recognized on his reservation.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Chairman, let me also add, I am certainly not going to object at all to these resolutions going forward. I just want to express my gratitude to the Chair and the Ranking Member for moving these resolutions forward, in particular, the resolution with regard to Israel's participation in WEOG, also known as the Western European and Others Group within the United Nations, is an issue that I have been working on for quite some time, and I congratulate Ms. Ros-Lehtinen for her leadership on this issue. It is also representative of the fact that I am on all of these resolutions, and I strongly support them, as well as H. Res. 617, expressing support for the accession of Israel to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, an issue, again, that I have been working on for quite some time. But all of these resolutions, I think, are laudable and deserve unanimous support, and with that I withdraw my right to object.

Mr. PITTS. The Chair thanks the gentleman. The gentleman from California, Mr. Schiff, is recognized.

Mr. SCHIFF. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word. I also want to thank the Chair of the Subcommittee for her leadership on these issues and join in my support of them. The Syria Accountability Act, I think, was a very important step, but H. Con. Res. 363 goes further, acknowledging the very significant and poor human rights record in Syria. I think, is very important, and it is regrettable that we have not seen more progress by Bashar Assad, notwithstanding high expectations in the beginning of his rule of that country.

I also want to reiterate my own condemnation of the persecution of the Iranian Bahá'í, something Congress has spoken out on many times, and I am proud to be a co-sponsor of that resolution.

Finally, on the two resolutions affecting Israel's membership in WEOG and OECD, the exclusion from these organizations, I think,

is a terrible injustice to the State of Israel and the people of Israel. I have long condemned the discriminatory treatment of Israel at the United Nations, and Israel's exclusion from its own regional bloc is really unprecedented and unfortunately yet another manifestation of deep hostility to Israel's mere existence by many nations in the world. So Israel's membership in WEOG and its participation and membership in OECD, I think, are critical. I support them completely. I thank the Chairman and yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PITTS. The Chair thanks the gentleman. Do any other Members seek recognition?

[No response.]

Mr. PITTS. If not, without objection, the resolutions are favorably reported as amended. The Subcommittee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 2:05 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

